

NSW

# Meriton's Macquarie Park tower tallest in suburban Sydney at 243m

**Sydney's tallest suburban tower will be constructed in city's booming north west, with building giant Meriton granted permission to reach heights of 243m above sea level. But not everyone is happy about the controversial decision.**

Ben Pike, Urban Affairs Reporter, The Sunday Telegraph

 Subscriber only | April 6, 2020 9:11am

Construction giant Meriton has been given permission to build the tallest building in suburban Sydney after the state government unexpectedly, and to the fury of the local council and Liberal MP, said they could build as high as 63 storeys.

Following a massive public backlash against its initial plans for the Macquarie Park site in 2018, the company offered to go down to 42 storeys, yet the government has given the construction giant approval for another 21 storeys – taking any proposed building on the Macquarie Park site to a maximum height of 243m above sea level (or 200m from the ground up).



 Meriton's planning proposal for 112 Talavera Rd at Macquarie Park.

At this height the residential apartment tower – proposed for Talavera Rd near shops, rail, the M2 and Macquarie University – would eclipse everything in Parramatta and all but 11 buildings in the CBD.

It's also only 3m (or one floor) under Sydney Airport's 246m above sea level height limit for buildings in that area.

**MORE FROM BEN PIKE**

[Meet the Concrete Kings of Sydney](#)

[Renters charged a 'pet licence fee'](#)

The Sunday Telegraph can also reveal the original \$40 million infrastructure contribution offered to Ryde Council – which the council abandoned in order to fight the proposal in 2018 – has been replaced with a \$12.5m infrastructure payment to the NSW Government.

The council may be able to recoup some infrastructure costs as part of the upcoming development application process.

Ryde Mayor Jerome Laxale, who in 2017 voted for the development unanimously with other councillors before opposing it the following year, said the decision was a “pro-developer” decision at the expense of the local community

“Despite the City of Ryde’s recommendation of refusal, the Berejiklian Government have quietly approved this 63 storey monstrosity during the COVID-19 crisis,” the Labor Mayor said.

“This is another dark day for planning in NSW. Why consult with local communities and councils if the Government are intent on ignoring us?”

The development attracted controversy shortly before Premier Gladys Berejiklian put a planning moratorium on new and current planning proposals before the March 2019 state election.

That prompted Meriton to drag Ms Berejiklian to court claiming the ban was costing the company \$50,000 per day and potentially thousands of jobs.



Ryde Labor Mayor Jerome Laxale.

Ryde Liberal MP Victor Dominello said he was “bitterly disappointed” by his own government’s decision.

The increase in size means there will be about 1260 apartments.

Construction of a 27-storey tower on the site is already underway, while construction on the remainder of the development will not start for at least another year.

Meriton is yet to put in a development application for the tower and will have to go through a design competition to achieve what the government says will be the best outcome.

NSW Department of Planning deputy secretary Brett Whitworth said the site will become a “gateway site to Macquarie Park”.

“I am of the view that there is a planning case for increasing the building height and density for the site to allow for redevelopment in accordance with the concept design exhibited with the planning proposal,” he said in a letter to Ryde Council March 12 amending their local environment plan.

All but 30 of the 400 submissions received during the council’s 2018 exhibition period were opposed to the development.

The Meriton approval may well be the first of another tidal wave of apartment building development in Sydney.

Planning Minister Rob Stokes this week announced the government will fast-track assessments of state significant developments, rezonings and development applications to resuscitate a suffocating economy.

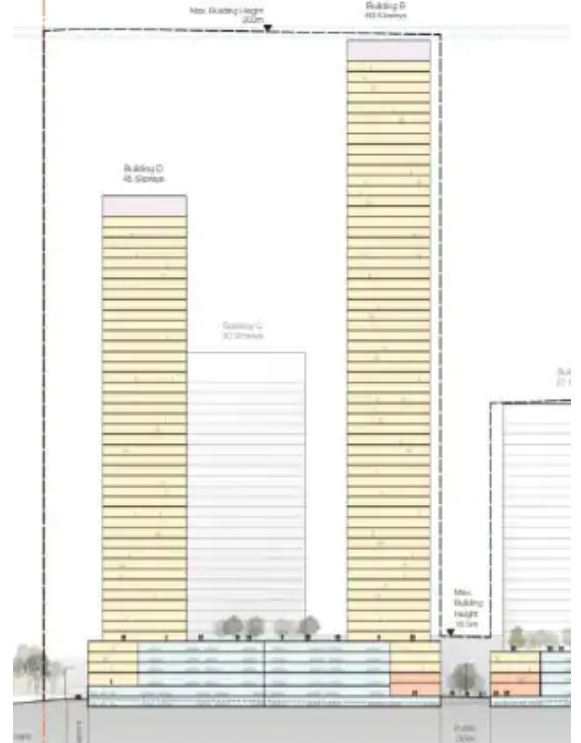
NSW Treasury approached developer lobby Urban Taskforce March 19 asking them about “shovel ready” projects that could be under construction within the next 6-12 months.

CEO Tom Forrest sent back a list this week of 76 major developments which remain stuck in the planning system.

“This is money that is not flowing through the NSW economy and creating jobs,” Mr Forrest said.

“Each of them requires specific attention to free up investment and create a pipeline of private sector funded construction projects.”

Both Meriton and Planning Minister Rob Stokes declined to comment.



Architectural drawings for 112 Talavera Rd at Macquarie Park.